rest with the Allies in continuing the struggle. He said that he had reason to believe that the German terms would be moderate.

The general tenor of opinion among the Allied and Neutral countries was opposed to any reply which would imply a point-blank refusal to negotiate. But opinion was practically unanimous that Germany should be asked to state her terms. It is significant that the Vatican also took this view, and expressed the belief that the terms would be moderate. The Vatican was suspected of being pro-German. It would probably be nearer the truth to say that the majority of the Cardinals had Austrian sympathies. The Vatican reply would therefore be influenced by representations received from Vienna. But Vienna was not Berlin and their interests and ambitions were not identical.

At its meeting on 18th December, 1916, the British War Cabinet had before it all the foregoing information. It was agreed that it would be best for the Allies to concert an identical Note in reply to the German Note, and that this should be signed by them all in Paris, and handed by the representative of France to the American Ambassador. The Note should refute the statements made in the preamble of the German Note, and state that a general offer of peace, without defining terms, was useless. Decision as to its other contents was left over, pending the consideration of a draft reply which M. Briand was reported to be

preparing*

As an indication of the attitude of the British Government at that period, I quote two passages bearing on the German Note from the first speech which I delivered in the House of Commons on